

South Capitol and East Capitol Streets



South Capitol Street

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East Capitol Street

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Recognizing the importance of the termini of South Capitol and East Capitol Streets to the U.S. Capitol, the Framework Plan explores their relationship with the study area and the city's waterfront. As emerging city destinations, these two areas have been subject to recent federal planning efforts that will continue to be refined as these areas develop.

South Capitol Street: A Spectacular New Waterfront Address for the Nation's Capital

Long a neglected stretch of empty lots and abandoned businesses between the U.S. Capitol and the Anacostia River, South Capitol Street is in the midst of a major transformation. A state-of-the-art baseball stadium that opened in 2008 has spurred major redevelopment through the South Capitol Street corridor.

This includes nearly six acres of new offices, residences, retail, and public space along the Anacostia waterfront where an unsightly concrete plant has long stood. Also planned is a large oval traffic rotary with a seven-acre landscaped commons, perfect for public gatherings and civic art.

Just beyond, an elegant and pedestrian-friendly new Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge will replace the current bridge. A public park will link the rotary to the bridge and will include a promenade along the water's edge. Further, the NCPC Memorials and Museum Master Plan has identified three sites for new commemorative works within this area, reinforcing the notion that the redeveloped South Capitol Street should include cultural destinations along with new mixed-use development and open space.

First called for in the Legacy Plan, the transformation of South Capitol Street into a lively urban boulevard has been a priority for more than a decade. To advance the Legacy vision, the Commission formed the South Capitol Street Task Force in 2005. This group, which included District of Columbia and federal stakeholders, created a refined vision of South Capitol Street that builds on the momentum of the

new baseball stadium and other related improvements to create a vibrant, mixed use, cultural destination. Key Components to making South Capitol Street a grand urban boulevard include:

- Virginia Avenue would become the mixed-use interface at the edge of Capitol Hill, with a circle intersection replacing the I-395 interchange.
- South Capitol Street / North of M Street would have a more urban character with smaller parcels, multiple street crossings, and no median.
- M Street is an important community intersection that would be marked with a vibrant urban square surrounded by high density development.
- South Capitol Street / South of M Street would have a larger scale with longer blocks, fewer street crossings, and a green median to connect with the river.
- Potomac Avenue would be reestablished as a waterfront roadway with an oval rotary intersection providing a memorial opportunity.
- Anacostia Waterfront would become a mixed-use open space area with recreational, cultural, and retail opportunities.
- Realigned Fredrick Douglas Bridge would be an elegant new river crossing that is pedestrian-friendly and attractive.
- Realigned Fredrick Douglas Bridge East Terminus would be an open space circle connecting the Suitland parkway and South Capitol Street

East Capitol Street: An Environmentally Friendly Gateway to the Monumental Core

The Robert F. Kennedy (RFK) Stadium site on East Capitol Street along the Anacostia River offers a rare opportunity for environmentally sensitive waterfront reclamation and mixed-use development, as well as space for future commemorative works and recreation. Occupying 190 acres at the eastern edge of the capital's monumental core, the existing stadium is owned by the city but sits on federal land leased to the District of Columbia for stadium use only. Recognizing that the facility could be vacated in the future, NCPC has recently analyzed possible future uses of the site.

As envisioned, the site could be redeveloped as a new cultural and recreational destination that serves as the eastern gateway to the monumental core. It could include an 80-acre waterfront park, which would provide much-needed recreation to Washington's eastern neighborhoods. The park would provide recreational fields, open space, links to the Anacostia River Walk trail, and riverfront sites for commemorative works.

The center piece of the redevelopment would be a new major commemorative or cultural work located at the terminus of East Capitol Street. Surrounding the terminus would be new residential and neighborhood retail development to activate and support this civic space. Finally, a new museum or federal office space could be developed across from an improved DC Armory facility.

Reconnecting the main axial streets adjacent to the East Capitol Street Bridge with Constitution Avenue and Independence Avenue would provide a monumental gateway for this prominent location and help better redistribute traffic into the city grid. Extending Water Street to Constitution Avenue would create a new urban edge between the areas of mixed-use development and the waterfront park. This vision for the area offers the promise of a memorable gateway, an exciting new urban destination, and needed neighborhood services.

The planning principles guiding the NCPC proposals for the area include:

- Reinforcing the site as an eastern gateway into the original L'Enfant City;
- Developing a new major commemorative or cultural work at the terminus of East Capitol Street;
- Creating a major active waterfront park with recreational areas to serve neighboring communities;
- Establishing Constitution and Independence Avenues and East Capitol Street as symmetrical key avenues;
- Increasing public access to the waterfront, establishing an environmental buffer along the waterfront, and developing the area as an ecological and recreational precinct;
- Encouraging mixed-use redevelopment, including residential and neighborhood retail uses.



The new South Capitol Street corridor will feature not only the baseball stadium, but also new offices, residences, shops, and commemorative sites, as well as a waterfront park.

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By creating a major cultural or commemorative work at the terminus of East Capitol Street surrounded with an active waterfront park and new development, the site becomes an exciting eastern gateway to Washington's Monumental Core.



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